



THERE IS NO OTHER!

Pastor Elmer Floyd
Eastminster Presbyterian
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(Elmer runs down the aisle dressed as Indiana Jones)

Woo!! Wow!! Don't you love those *Indiana Jones* movies? There's a new one coming out this summer. Somebody help that lady start her heart, will you? *(Laughter)*

It has been an amazing thing, I mean, anybody like these movies besides me? All right, the four of us, good, we'll all get together later and talk about it. Thank you for the rest of you! Some of that section over there may not have even heard of them yet, they're coming out soon.

In search of, I was always excited about the in search of! And Indiana Jones was always, what you are laughing about? Yeah, Barbara, I've been working on this! He was in search of and it was the excitement and the enthusiasm and I don't know about you, but it was the effort he put forth. And it was all those different things, the energy, to find the thing that he was searching for. It's amazing to me how much energy people will put out to find what they're looking for. Anybody ever lost anything in your house? And you found 47 other things in the process of looking for that one thing? And now the whole house is torn up and you've got piles of stuff that needs to be organized, but you're not quitting, no matter how much your spouse wants you to. You just, you're tearing that place up, because it is important for you to find what you're looking for.

Well, I got to tell you, Jeff and I have the privilege, where did he go, he's not even paying attention to me any more, and oh there he is. Jeff and I have the privilege, that over the next five weeks, we're going to take you on a serious search. Where's my compass? I love that picture, too. It's a compass that's looking for that right bearing, that right location, that right deal. And if you notice what's right next to it? The Ten Commandments.

We're going to take you in the next several weeks in search of the good life. But more than just the good life, see, good life isn't satisfying enough. It's not significant enough; it's not as meaningful in your life. We're going on one of those Indiana Jones searches. It's not just for the good life; it's for the Godly life. It's for the Holy Life. And we're going to take that journey together as we pilgrimage toward Easter.

Won't you pray with me?

Oh, God, there may not be a more intense passage of scripture that is truly written as Your love letter to us. For it is the secrets of the good life, the secrets of the Godly life, the secrets of the Holy life. It is the things that You wrote directly for us, not to restrict us, not to bind us, but to give us freedom in every sense of the word, to become what You created us to be.

In these moments and in the weeks to come, I pray that Your Holy Spirit will bring this text to life. But I also pray that You would open our hearts and our minds, our ears, that we may see and understand as we never have before. And then make that personal application. As we study and meditate on the love letter from the Father.

This day we ask Your blessing on the one who stands before these people, for he is a mere mortal, touched and tainted by sin. Speak to him and through him, I pray, in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Tonight I want to look at the first two of the Commandments, the first three verses that God gave in that thing called the Ten Commandments. By the way, they're not the ten suggestions. They have a little higher implication than that and a little stronger application. It is trying to tell us who to worship and how not to worship. It's focusing on the issues of priority. And then I'm going to give you a little acrostic to how do you maintain that in your life. What do we got up there? There we go.

Exodus Chapter 20 is the passage we are in, looking at verses 2, 3, and 4. It begins by saying, "I am the Lord, Your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery." Stop right there. What does that mean to you? Let me rephrase that, what does that mean to the people of Israel that were receiving these words for the first time?*(Voices from audience)*

Thank you very much. In case you're new to this, this is an interactive activity, you can talk back to the preacher now and talk to him and give him ideas and hopefully positive suggestions besides, "Get off the stage!"

Okay, it meant freedom, what else? He's the Man! You know, reminding him, you know, you didn't do this on your own and it wasn't those pagan gods of Egypt that brought you out of this. There's only one source, there's one One that loves you. And I love the way it starts, it says, "I am." Period. That's all that needs to be said. That was a phrase that was used by the God Jehovah throughout all of time and in fact it's the same words that Jesus used several times in the New Testament when it began to say, "Who do I say sent me? I am". Not I was, not I'm going to be. I am means a constant state. I have always existed, I exist today and I will exist forever. I am. There's only one of those in the world, and that's God.

I am the Lord, Your God, who brought you, out of Egypt, out of the hands of slavery. And the next verse, He tells them, you shall have no other gods before me. Anybody notice anything unique about that phrase?

The "g" is small, anybody know why the "g" is small? Cause there's only one God. In fact, that phrase, gods, is really spoken into a culture that there were many, many other religions of the day. There were many images and idols, there were many concepts that were truly weren't worshiped, but they didn't count to be gods. It was people's imagination and it was what mankind would make to become their god. They would chose what god they wanted to follow and they make that god up. Does that ever happen to society today? Yeah. What are some of the gods of our society today? (*Audience response*)

Money. What else? Power. Cars. Yeah, you're talking about those high school kids, I know. College kids, too. Celebrities. Ok, other religions, or they create their own religion. Sports figures. Music figures. Fashion. Fun. Phones, yeah, there's a zillion phones. I've heard several of them tonight. What else? What else does our society make to be god? Computers. Success. Beauty.

You look across our society and it's really almost scary to see what has society created to be things that are worshiped? What does our society pursue and spend time and energy and we're going to look at that in a second. And it's that there are many little g's that compete for your time and energy and finances. But they are not the One True God, Jehovah. The God of the Old Testament. The God of the New Testament. The God whose Son came to speak to us, the God who sent His holy spirit to empower and guide us. You have no other gods. And He says, I am the Lord Your God, you shall have no other god. And the next of the commandments is: And you shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on earth below or under the waters below. Does that narrow it down for you?

Pretty much does that mean anything has the capability of being? Nothing. Nothing. Nothing from the heavens to the earth to under the waters. There is nothing that has the right to be made into an idol. Even American idols. Which there's another whole sermon series on that.

"I am the Lord Your God." And it says, no other gods before me. Nothing has the right to, that phrase before me. Literal Hebrew translation means in the face of. There is nothing in all of existence that has the right to stand in the face of God. Can you imagine that? Think of that every time you read that in the Old Testament where it says someone is before God, it means they were in front of the face of God. The awe. The fear. The majesty, the power.

There is no god that has the right to stand in My presence.

Why do people make idols? Why do people make idols? Okay, they may not know the real God. (*Audience response*)

Okay, they're trying to put their own god, and I will get that back in a box, is a great phrase. Okay, something that they enjoy more, and we're going to talk about that in a second, too.

I mean, my heart breaks when I think about people who make idols because they try to make God something small enough that they can handle. They try to put, and you may have done this at some point in time in your life, you ever try to keep God in the form of Jesus in the cradle his whole life? Because if he grows up, how do you deal with that? Then if you've got God as the creator of the universe, I don't know about you, but sometimes, do you ever try to manipulate God? To put pressure on God? Well, it doesn't work, thank you very much.

Yeah, there's a great Afro-American play that says your arms are too short to box with God. You lose every time. But I think that's a big part of it. People try to make idols so that their God becomes something that they control. Even their small-g god. But the reality is that if you can control it, it ceases to be any kind of god.

The first two of the, and we're going to keep putting these things up here so you can kind of keep track of the different commands, the first one is, "There is only one God." The second one is, "You can make no idols." And we're going to keep this list up here as we continue to talk about these Ten Commandments.

The bottom line for both of these first two commandments is a very simple one and it means to put God first. The realization is you have to establish priorities. Have you ever been told that before? Did you like the first time? Do you like it this time? *(Audience response.)*

Not much, no, why? Because it forces us to make choices that we don't want to make. And it even tells us what has to be on the top of the list, even though we would like to see other things to be that way. And I don't know about you, but even when I said I want to make God first, I still wrestle in my heart, because I look around and I try edging other things around. How can I tell if I've really got God first? I'm going to help you, I'm glad you asked.

We have an acrostic. That means letters, that each letter stands for a phrase or a word. You with me? Okay. Shake your head or do something out there, folks, you're dozing on me, and I'm a little worried.

I'm going to go through this really quickly. First, that F stands for finances. I knew I'd rattle some people, I know you hate me already. Come to church, all they talk about is money, money, money. You know what? The number one topic that Jesus talked about while he was on earth was finances and material objects and how to handle them properly. You really want to tell what's first in your life? Look at your checkbook or your debit card. Will tell you what is, reveals the priorities of your life. Scripture says that we are supposed to give God the first part. There's an issue of, if we really want to put God first, there's an issue of financial, let your pocket talk.

And that's not easy. You know, especially when we talk about folks in financial tough times. You know, some of us remember college may not have been that easy of a thing, or those first few jobs we had, we're trying to eke it out. Ivan talked a few weeks ago about the significance of finance in his life and I've got to tell you, I've been a tither for a long, long time because I've rather give God 10 percent. Anybody ever try to keep all of it for yourself and then lose it? You know? There's an issue that if you give it to God first, he promises to bless the other 90 percent.

(Audience response.)

What's that? That's exactly right, it's all His anyway, so He just wants a tenth of it back. He's asking for, give the first parts to God. The first, that F in putting God first is finances, the I is interest. What are the interests of your life? What do you get it excited about? What are you living for? Scripture says, "Do all things for the glory of God." 1 Corinthians 10:31. An attitude of gratitude.

Now, it doesn't mean, you have to eliminate, anybody like activities? Interests? Golf? I like golf, golf's good. And when I get out, I talk to God a lot sometimes, when I golf. And I thank Him for the ability to walk and I thank Him for the sunshine, and I thank Him for a car, and a miracle shot. Vacations. Eating. Collecting stamps. You do it all to the glory of God if your attitude understands that it's for and to Him. He's given you the talent, He's given you the ability. It says, an attitude of gratitude that I will respond. That even in the interests of my life, I will respond with an attitude of gratitude. Finances. Interests.

R is relationships. I love this one: Proverbs 27:19 says, "What a man is really like is shown by the kind of friends he has." Here's an interesting statement and I'm going to eliminate you guys for a second, I'll come back, you're an old fart, but I'll come back to the rest of them. How many here have told your children that you approve or didn't approve of the friends they're hanging out with? Have you ever set boundaries that you wouldn't let your kid hang out with somebody else or you encouraged your friends to hang out with somebody else? Why do you think that changes when you get old?

If that's a positive suggestion for your children as they're growing up, does it make any more difference to you as adults? Or does it really become more significant? That if we really do become like the people we hang out, shouldn't it say that if I want to put God first in my life, I need to look at my friendships too? That doesn't mean my associates. We've talked a long time about walking across the room. We've talked about initiating friendships with those that may be outside of the body of Christ. We know that we need to be salt and light to reach out to the world. But who do you hang with? Who do you spend the quality time of life with? Who do you seek for the suggestions or the support or the impact of your life? When you're faced with a tough decision, who do you call? Those people need to be in the body of Christ. Or they're going to give you bad advice. If we're really going to seek God first, we may need to make new friends or change some friendships.

S is schedule. What'd you have to do today? Anybody here make a do list? You ever get it all done? No, why? Because you're dumb. Don't laugh at me, if you put 17 things on your do list, are you going to get it accomplished? Ain't no way. Now, I'm not saying don't make a do list, make a do list and then have you ever stopped and prayed and said, "Ok, God, what is it you want me to get done today?" Have you ever invited Him into that decision-making process? You ever invite

Him into that schedule-making process? You know, I have never found a time in my life that God hasn't given me enough time to do His will.

Along with that schedule, how about making an appointment with God every day. You ever write Him in the date book? Do you schedule a time sometimes during the day? I'm a morning person, mornings are the best time of the day for me, I'm up, oh my God early. I am way up. I get up about the times I used to come home. Okay? I mean, that's my schedule now. (Laughter)

He just got it, all right. Some of you are afternoon people. I don't know any of us that can't take a lunch break and take your lunch and take God. Talk to him. Take 15 minutes and just pray and read His Word and meditate. Marinate. 10 to 15 minutes a day. I don't care where you put it, but put it some place. Put God in your schedule. Allow God to help establish your daily schedule. And third is pray. And if you're a family, pray as a family. Do you know that the divorce rate in America is about 1 out of 3? 1 out of 3 marriages in America fail. Harvard University did a study, are you ready for this? I'm glad you're sitting down. A married couple who prays together and reads the Bible together, you know what the divorce rate is? 1 out of 1,150. 1 out of 3 in society. Couples that pray together and read the Bible together, 1 out of 1,150. I'm saying that's hedging your bet, you know what I mean?

If you want to put God first, the S is put Him in your schedule.

And here may be the toughest one and that means the T. Put God into your troubles. Anybody ever think about praying is the last resort? You do everything within your physical ability, you do everything that you physically can do and then sometimes you invite friends to help you to do, and then you pray. Isn't it goofy that often times it's, what a coincidence, that after you pray, you get results? Wouldn't it be so cool that God is so much of a priority in your life that any time any trouble comes, the first thing you do is just drop to your knees and ask God in. God is bigger than me, I need your help. I love the prayer of Peter when he walked on the water. You guys know the one I'm talking about? Jesus is walking on the water and he says, "Hey, Peter, come to me." And Peter responds, "Okay." And he got up out of the boat and he put one foot in and he walked on the water but when he looked at the waves and he saw the trouble around him, when he was noticing the wind and the waves and it took his attention off of Jesus, he began to sink and he had a great theological prayer, "HELP!!!"

I tried to cover the microphone just for you, dear. It don't take long to pray that one, folks, but you better be praying. Invite him into the difficulties. Invite him into the problems. Anyone here got a problem with worrying? You need Jesus to help you more. If God's in the middle of it, is there anything you need to worry about?

Another parable, another true story that the disciples were with Jesus in the middle of the boat and there's a storm going on around them and the water is slopping up over the edges of the boats and they wake Jesus up and go, "We're going to die!"

Can you think of a safer place in your life than to be in a boat with Jesus? That always freaks me out. And I just see Jesus waking up and wiping the sleep out of his eye and he's just shaking his head and he's going, "You ruined a good nap." And he says, "Be still." And it says, "The lake turned to glass."

When we worry, we take problems back out of God's hands and try to do it in our hands. God calls you to do the best and give it to Him. We need to involve God in our troubles. We need to invite God in our finances, our interests, our relationships, our schedule, and troubles. We need to make God first. My favorite verse, the verse I memorized, the first verse I ever memorized as a Christian, Matthew 6:33 says this, "Seek first His kingdom", get that? "Seek first His kingdom and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." Seek first Him. The Lord our God is One God. And there's nothing above this earth or on this earth or under this earth that deserves to be worshipped. Priorities.

As we come to the table, let's make God our priority for us right now.

Father, we know we fall short, we're imperfect in Your eyes. But Your love letter says that we're okay. And You want to make a difference. Meet us as we prepare to come to the table. In Your name, Amen.
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James, the half brother of Jesus says this: "Do not merely listen to the word, and so to see yourself, do what it says." Do not be merely hear the word, but put God first. We are in search of the good life!

And all God's people said amen.

If you would like to talk with someone about this message or your spiritual life, or to have someone pray with you, the pastors and elders of the church would welcome your call.

Eastminster Presbyterian Church

Reaching Up! Reaching Out! Reaching In!

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